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Abstract

Junior Leader Development: Is the United States Army Preparing its Lieutenants for Success? by MAJ Kenneth A. Romaine Jr., U.S. Army, 47 pages.

The end of the Cold War is just one of several changes in the operational environment facing young officers entering the military at the dawn of the twenty-first century. There is no longer a single, clearly identified threat to the United States to serve as a focal point for preparation. Societal changes in values have altered the makeup of the forces which lieutenants must lead. Increased dispersion has increased the likelihood that small unit leaders will be forced to make difficult decisions in the absence of detailed guidance from senior officers. Finally, trends toward multinational operations, increased numbers of civilians on the battlefield, and near real-time media coverage, combine to create a situation where tactical decisions can have unintended strategic consequences.

This monograph addresses the issue of how well the United States Army prepares lieutenants to operate in this environment. The Army's leader development doctrine emphasizes three aspects in its leader development program: institutional education and training, operational assignments, and self-development. Each of these "pillars of leader development" are examined to determine the developmental value of each as it pertains to preparing new lieutenants for their first assignments. The outcomes of the Army's leader development program are compared to the leader attributes necessitated by the environment of future conflict described in the first part of the paper.

The monograph concludes that the Army leader development program does not adequately prepare new lieutenants for success prior to arrival at their first unit. Three primary conclusions describe where the program falls short. First, there is too much emphasis placed on the self-development and operational assignment pillars rather than on institutional training. Second, the instruction that is given emphasizes tangible skills, such as technical and tactical competence, rather than teaching the leadership skills necessary for the current environment. Finally, there is not enough emphasis placed on the development of cognitive characteristics, such as systems thinking, which may help lieutenants make up for their lack of experience in complex or ambiguous situations. Several recommendations for the leader development program are discussed.

Junior Leader Development: Is the United States Army Preparing its Lieutenants for Success?

**A Monograph
by
MAJ Kenneth A. Romaine Jr.
United States Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
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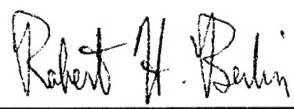
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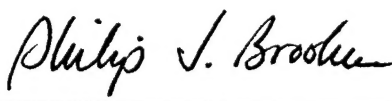
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is key, and the actions of leaders often make the difference between success and failure, particularly in small units.¹
FM 3.0 *Operations*

As the above quotation states, leadership can make the difference in battle. According to U.S. Army doctrine, effective leadership synchronizes the other components of combat power: maneuver, firepower, protection, and information, to create the synergy that leads to victory.² Though history has proven that leadership can be the deciding factor on the battlefield, it has also shown that this leadership takes many forms. There is no one leadership style or action that has proven universally effective for all situations. How then, do policy makers in the U.S. Army know how, or what, to train future leaders? Which traits should be emulated? Which examples should be followed and which should be explained away as historical anomalies? These are critical questions for the U.S. Army as it determines the leader development program for the future force.

As Army leadership makes this assessment it must recognize the dynamic nature of the environment in which its officers lead. Historical examples should not be applied indiscriminately to the current situation if the leadership environment has changed since the previous doctrine was written.³ The Army must adapt its leader development system to any changes in the social, political, or military domains to maximize the benefit of its

¹ Department of the Army Field Manual 3.0 - *Operations* [DRAG Edition] (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), 4-7. FM 3.0 is scheduled to replace FM 100-5 as the Army doctrinal manual for operations. Though there are many differences between the two manuals, FM 3.0 has retained the emphasis on leadership as the critical element of combat power.

² Ibid. 4-3 to 4-11. FM 3.0 adds Information as an element of combat power.

³ Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch. *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*. (New York: Free Press, 1990), 35-40. Cohen and Gooch present a detailed theory of why military organizations fail. One reason is that militaries learn the wrong lessons from history.

technological edge in materiel. As values change, new types of missions emerge, or new organizations are formed, the Army must anticipate leadership requirements and take the necessary steps to develop the needed attributes in its future leaders. This monograph assesses whether significant changes have occurred in the tactical environment from a leadership perspective and whether or not the Army's leader development system develops the attributes necessary for lieutenants to operate effectively in that environment.

To answer these questions, this monograph analyzes the environment of conflict and the likely missions for Army forces in the near future to determine the necessary leader attributes for success in this environment. Next, the monograph describes the Army's leader development system and the knowledge, skills, and behaviors (KSBs) taught to lieutenants in preparation for their first assignment. Finally, the adequacy of the leader development system is assessed using the following criteria: 1) Does the current system prepare officers for the full spectrum of operations in which they are likely to participate? 2) Does the current leader development system broaden lieutenants' perspectives and develop in them a systems approach to solving problems? 3) Does the current system allow officers flexibility in choosing the appropriate leadership actions in a given situation?

The focus of this monograph is on the leader development system as it relates to the preparation of new lieutenants for the missions they will likely be asked to perform upon entering their first units. There are several reasons for narrowing this research to officers at this stage in their careers. First, the Army's leader development program emphasizes three "pillars" of development: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-

development.⁴ Lieutenant is the one grade of officer whose leadership development rests primarily in the institutional domain. Most new lieutenants have very little operational experience.⁵ Research shows that young leaders begin to understand where to focus their self-development activities only after experiencing leadership situations and receiving feedback on their performance.⁶ As a result of their limited experience, lieutenants are more likely to be unsure of what leadership dimensions they need to focus on for self-development. Therefore, if there is going to be a shortcoming in the Army's leader development system, it is most likely to occur where two of the three legs of the system are weakest – at the new lieutenant level.

In addition to lieutenants' general lack of operational experience and subsequent inability to focus their self-development activities, changes in the environment of conflict generate questions about the relevance of the existing leader development paradigm as it prepares leaders for this new environment.⁷ Junior leaders must lead soldiers in very complex and ambiguous environments where seemingly simple tactical decisions can have dramatic strategic implications.⁸ The complex nature of these situations is not obvious to the inexperienced lieutenant nor are the potential unintended outcomes of tactical decisions immediately evident. Newly commissioned officers may not be adequately prepared to handle these situations unless they have been exposed to similar

⁴ Department of the Army Pamphlet 350-58, *Leader Development for America's Army*, (Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 13 October 1994) available at <http://www-cgsc.army.mil/cal/LDO/ldo/350-58.htm>, accessed 9 September 2000.

⁵ The majority of officer candidates do not get operational experience prior to attending their pre-commissioning schooling. OCS candidates may have some experience though not in the officer role. Some ROTC or USMA cadets may have prior service experience before entering school but most have not.

⁶ Stanley A. McChrystal, John D. Gardner, and Timothy P. McHale. "Bridging the Competence Gap: Developing Tactical Leaders for the Army of 2015." (U.S. Army War College Report: Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1997), 30-32.

⁷ Dean A. Nowowiejski, "A New Leader Development Paradigm." *Military Review* (Jul/Aug 95).

⁸ David R. Segal and Dana P. Eyre *U.S. Army in Peace Operations at the Dawning of the Twenty-First Century* (U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, May 1996), 5.

conditions in their pre-commissioning experience or training or have been educated in ways to help them deal with this ambiguity or complexity.⁹

Finally, the challenges of direct-level leadership are more pronounced for the lieutenant than for the field grade officer. The United States is facing societal changes in values such as service ethic and organizational commitment.¹⁰ Such social values and generational differences cannot be ignored when considering leadership issues. Just as advances in technology lead to changes in equipment, organization, and doctrine; changes in social and political conditions create a need for changes in the way leaders influence subordinates. Since lieutenants will be the direct-level leaders responsible for motivating soldiers during any operation, societal changes will more likely manifest themselves in leadership challenges for the lieutenant than for organizational or strategic-level leaders.

Assumptions

There are several assumptions that are essential to this research. First, and most important, is the belief that leadership can be learned.¹¹ While there are some advocates of the theory that leadership ability is innate, it is generally accepted that many aspects of leadership can, and should, be taught to prospective leaders.¹² The second assumption is

⁹ Gary Klein, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998). Klein argues that people make decisions in stressful or time-constrained environments based on pattern recognition from previous experiences. Fewer experiences (Klein calls it "expertise") results in a poorer "mental simulation" of the scenario and a qualitatively worse decision.

¹⁰ Bob Losyk, "Generation X: What They Think and What They Plan to Do," *Futurist* (Mar/Apr 97), 39-44.

¹¹ Donald H. Horner Jr., "Leader Development and Why it Remains Important," *Military Review*, (July/Aug 95), 77.

¹² Ellen Van Elser, Cynthia McCauley, and Russ Moxley, introduction to *The Center For Creative Leadership Handbook of Leader Development* (New York: Jossey Bass), 17-18. The authors identify several traits and skills that must be learned such as self-confidence, taking a broad and systemic view, and developing creative thinking.

that the environmental trends discussed in this paper will continue into the foreseeable future. While it is impractical to believe that the future is predictable, it is necessary to assert that the environmental conditions described in Chapter Two will continue in order to justify making changes to the existing leader development system.¹³ Finally, it is assumed that lieutenants are capable of learning or developing the types of skills and attributes outlined in this paper. Since the majority of lieutenants are between the ages of twenty and twenty-four, it is possible that maturity level may play a role in their ability to acquire certain skills or characteristics required on the future battlefield.¹⁴ This assumption is made in the interest of brevity to avoid the discussions of individual maturity and adult development. Future research is needed to make further assessments concerning the cognitive capacity and mental maturity of Army leaders.

Methodology

To answer the research question, it is necessary to assess the leadership environment and compare the leader attributes required in that environment to those currently emphasized by the Army's leader development system. The next chapter analyzes the nature of the environment and describes the changes that have occurred in the conduct of operations in the past decade. Several specific areas of the environment are addressed including; the nature of the threat, the types of missions engaged in, dispersion on the battlefield, the changing nature of the society from which the Army recruits its soldiers, and the increase in the number of civilians on the battlefield.

¹³ The author argues that the current leader development system was properly designed for a different set of conditions. If the environment returns to its previous state, the changes recommended in this paper would no longer be valid.

¹⁴ T. Owen Jacobs, Appendix I in *ROTC Future Lieutenant Study*, (Fort Monroe, VA: 1998), 250-252.

In Chapter Three, the author describes the leadership KSBs necessary to lead in the environment created by these changes. The author addresses each of the environmental changes in terms of its impact on a lieutenant's ability to lead in a variety of military operations. The chapter concludes with a description of systems thinking, transformational leadership, and emotional intelligence; three of the skills and attributes deemed necessary for success.

In Chapter Four the author describes the Army's current leader development system. Each of the three pillars of the leader development system are reviewed to determine the knowledge, skills, and behaviors developed by the system. Pre-commissioning and post-commissioning education are evaluated to determine the emphasis that each places on the attributes identified as necessary to lead in the environment of the future.

Chapter Five identifies the shortcomings of the current system as they relate to preparing lieutenants for the leadership requirements of their first assignment. Each of the three criteria discussed previously: preparation for full spectrum operations, systems thinking, and flexibility in leadership responses, is used to evaluate the leader development system. The author shows that the current system does not develop the necessary KSBs for new lieutenants. The author makes several recommendations on how to adapt the current system so that lieutenants will be better prepared to handle the myriad of tasks they will be asked to accomplish in the complex environment in which they will lead. Implications for further research are also addressed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE "NEW WORLD ORDER"

We are exploring carefully the complexity of the world in which we are living, and have been attempting to understand that instability and change will be with us for the foreseeable future.¹⁵

Gen. Gordon Sullivan

Strategic Environment

Since 1989, the United States has shifted its strategic focus from a single peer competitor to an almost unlimited number of potential threats across the complete spectrum of conflict.¹⁶ At that time, then-President George Bush used the phrase "new world order" to describe the changing strategic landscape. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the specific threat to United States prosperity has been increasingly difficult to discern. While the strategic situation facing the United States is indeed "new," it is far from "ordered."¹⁷

The war against Iraq provided an opportunity for the United States to test its previous doctrine, training, and leader development during the conduct of a major operation against a conventional threat. Most accounts indicate that these programs were validated by the overwhelming success of that campaign. Since the Gulf War, however, the strategic environment has continued to change dramatically. It has become

¹⁵ General Gordon Sullivan, foreword to *Ethnic Conflict and Regional Instability: Implications for U.S. Policy and Army Roles and Missions*, by Robert Pfaltzgraff and Richard Shultz, eds. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 6.

¹⁶ Louis Caldera and Dennis Reimer, *United States Army Posture Statement FY00*. Report presented to the Committees and Subcommittees of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, First Session, 106th Congress (February, 1999), 3.

¹⁷ Segal and Eyre, 1. The authors discuss the fact that while the United States faces a "new" strategic environment, this environment is far from predictable due to the increase in regional conflicts caused by the end of the bipolar cold war.

increasingly likely that U.S. forces will be deployed to operations at the low-intensity end of the spectrum of conflict rather than against another major conventional threat.¹⁸

Although preparedness for a major theater war remains the ultimate priority, both the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Military Strategy (NMS) call for U.S. forces to be prepared to conduct operations across the full spectrum of conflict and to be prepared to deploy rapidly anywhere in the world. The National Security Strategy outlines a policy of “engagement” which seeks to continue the United States’ activities in foreign countries to “enhance America’s security. To bolster America’s economic prosperity. To promote democracy and human rights abroad.”¹⁹ These objectives ensure that the operational environment will remain complex and ambiguous for the foreseeable future as the U.S. continues to get involved in a wide variety of conflicts that fall under this broad mandate.

The change in the strategic environment creates unique leadership challenges for leaders at every level. The requirements of this strategic context broaden the scope of capabilities required of officers as they prepare to lead in both conventional major theater war (MTW) and military operations other than war (MOOTW). Perhaps even more importantly, the new strategic environment does not present a unifying force to the population, or to service members, of the United States. In the past, the Soviet threat was a unifying force throughout American society, especially within the military, as citizens and soldiers could easily see the relevance of maintaining and training a force to defeat this potential adversary. The loss of this threat makes it more difficult to find recruits

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office: 1999), pg. iii.

and to convince soldiers that increased operations tempo is for a worthwhile cause.²⁰

These strategic issues create a myriad of tactical leadership problems for young lieutenants which are addressed below.

Tactical Environment

Just as the strategic environment has changed, the tactical environment in the first decade of the 21st Century is also much different than it was fifty – or even twenty - years ago. Lieutenants are being asked to lead soldiers in very complex and ambiguous environments where fairly routine tactical decisions can have dramatic strategic implications. As an example, Abizaïd and Wood described junior leaders in Kurdistan who were “...required to defuse numerous potentially dangerous situations” which could have had strategic consequences for the entire force. And they had to do so without the ability to seek guidance from a more senior or experienced commander.²¹ This example demonstrates how tactical decisions increasingly have strategic implications in many of the situations in which lieutenants find themselves.

Inappropriate leader actions at the tactical level can result in a number of serious consequences for the entire operation. For instance, the perception of favoritism towards one faction when mediating a conflict can result in the loss of credibility for all U.S. forces in theater. As one general officer noted in Bosnia, his forces were seen “as a

²⁰ Edwin Dorn and others. “American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, CSIS Report: February, 2000), 6.

²¹ Abizaïd and Wood, “Preparing for Peacekeeping: Military Training and the Peacekeeping Environment,” *Special Warfare Magazine*, Vol. 7, no. 2 (April 1994). 17-18.

single entity” by the belligerents. The actions of one soldier were attributed to all soldiers in the unit.²² This attribution gives every tactical action the potential for strategic consequences. Unit credibility can be lost at any time by the action of any individual, making it critical that leaders are able to understand the strategic environment and make decisions that are consistent with the higher mission, and also with national objectives.

Leader actions at the tactical level have other strategic consequences as well. Failure to prevent escalation of a confrontation at the tactical level might result in the injury or death of a service member. This can have several operational or strategic consequences. First, with the expectation of minimum casualties during peace operations, any injury or death could lead to increased pressure to remove U.S. forces from an operation – such as in Somalia.²³ Alternatively, injury to a U.S. soldier could cause soldiers to act contrary to the rules of engagement in an attempt to retaliate. This would again undermine the credibility of the entire force. Finally, such events could challenge the perception that U.S. (or coalition) forces are able to maintain control in a particular area resulting in increased violence or violations of written accords.

Although there is some debate about changing training priorities from conventional METL to a MOOTW-based METL to better prepare officers for these scenarios,²⁴ this potential solution falls short of addressing the issue of preparing officers for any type of mission in the future. MOOTW training may better prepare officers for future field-grade

²² Peer L.E. M. Everts, “Command and Control in Stressful Conditions,” in *The Human in Command: Exploring the Modern Military Experience*, eds. Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, (New York, Plenum Publishers, 2000), 71.

²³ Terrence Lyons and Ahmed Samatar, *Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1995), 58-59.

²⁴ Joseph F. Birchmeier, “The Impact of MOOTW-based Unit Training on Leader Development” SAMS Monograph, (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1999). Birchmeier argues that changing to a MOOTW-based training focus would not hinder leader development and might help to prepare junior leaders for more senior positions.

assignments, as Birchmeier clearly argues, but it would not be sufficient to prepare lieutenants for leading in a variety of missions ranging from humanitarian support to full scale conventional war.

Where MOOTW training falls short in developing leaders is on those leader skills or attributes that cannot be taught on short notice and must therefore be part of the leader development system from the earliest stages. While it is possible to train leaders in new tactics, (such as checkpoint operations), or mission specific information, (such as cultural awareness or the historical “road to war”), other aspects of leader training require substantially more time to develop. Systems thinking and tolerance for ambiguity are just two examples of attributes that require development over a relatively long period of time, yet are desirable traits for leaders in all types of situations.²⁵

Rather than debate the merits of preparing for either MTW or MOOTW, this author believes that it is more practical to determine those KSBs necessary to lead in any operation within the full spectrum of conflict. This monograph goes beyond the leadership requirements of operating in one environment or the other and identifies those characteristics necessary to succeed in both. Attributes that will aid lieutenants in both MOOTW and MTW operations must be the focus of the Army’s leader development program to ensure the flexibility of leader responses to any challenge.

There are several characteristics of the operational environment to consider when determining what traits are necessary for officers to lead effectively. Whether in a MOOTW scenario or in a MTW against a conventional threat, the issue of increased dispersion on the battlefield impacts how an officer leads his soldiers. Additionally,

²⁵McChrystal, Gardner, and McHale, “Competence Gap,” 22-25, 27-29. This paper identifies these traits as essential to leadership in the future and then discusses ways to develop them in leaders.

individual differences in the values, upbringing, and motivations of each soldier, create unique leadership challenges. Finally, the increase in the presence of civilians on the battlefield has an impact on what is required of junior leaders in the Army. All of these variables influence leadership regardless of whether the unit is involved in a conventional war, a humanitarian mission, or a peacekeeping operation. Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below.

Battlefield Dispersion

Ever since the advent of the rifled musket, continued technological advances have caused the battlefield to become increasingly sparse. As weapons became more lethal, commanders altered the tactics of the battlefield in an attempt to make the soldier more survivable. One of these tactical changes was the dispersion of troops on the battlefield. Since the late 19th Century, the distance between soldiers in combat or other operations has been continually increasing.²⁶ This increase in dispersion creates a difficulty for leading soldiers in battle.

In a conventional war, dispersion makes it more difficult to engage in the direct leadership required to convince soldiers of their safety and of the importance of mission accomplishment.²⁷ Citing a study by Shils and Janowitz in his book *Combat Motivation*, Anthony Kellet states that, "Cohesion within the primary group was enhanced by spatial

²⁶ James J. Schneider, "Vulcan's Anvil: The American Civil War and the Emergence of Operational Art," (Fort Leavenworth: SAMS, USACGSC, 16 June 1991) The author discusses the history and rationale for increased dispersion on the battlefield and its influence on the development of operational art.

²⁷ S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Alexandria: Byrrd Enterprises, 1947). Chapter 4 goes into great detail about the problems associated with isolation and Chapters 9 and 10 explain the benefits of maintaining awareness of unit cohesion in the face of the enemy.

proximity, by the capacity for intimate communication, by the provision of personal protectiveness from junior officers.”²⁸ In short, platoon leaders provide a sense of security for soldiers. It is increasingly difficult to produce that feeling of protection when units are spread across larger and larger spaces.

In a peace operation, the challenge of increased dispersion is slightly different, though possibly more demanding, for the leader. Whereas in conventional combat the fear caused by isolation is what the leader must help a soldier overcome, the isolation in stability or support operations create different challenges. Although there may be some of the same elements of fear, there is less likelihood that a soldier will feel as threatened in such an environment. The additional challenge for leaders in a peace operation is that soldiers will be operating away from centralized leadership and will be conducting unconventional missions. In this case, a leader’s presence is not needed to maintain cohesion, but rather to maintain motivation for a job that may seem boring or monotonous.

Dispersion further adds to the leadership dilemma because junior leaders are often faced with making political-military decisions that were previously reserved for more senior officers.²⁹ In their discussion of U.S. involvement in peace operations, Segal and Eyre state, “...the very nature of these operations precludes effective centralization of decision making.”³⁰ Whether engaging in negotiations, mediating disputes, or interpreting rules of engagement, young leaders in MOOTW are faced with difficult

²⁸ Anthony Kellet, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle* (Boston: Kluwer, 1982), 100.

²⁹ Howard D. Graves and Don M. Snider. “Emergence of the Joint Officer,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn, 1996), 55.

³⁰ Segal and Eyre, 43. The authors give excellent examples from Somalia and Pakistan to illustrate the fact that it is difficult to maintain centralized decision-making in peace operations. Officers and NCOs at platoon level are described making decisions normally reserved for battalion commanders due to the dispersed nature of operations.

decisions that require a broader understanding of the greater context of the mission. Segal and Eyre also note that, "Because of the uncertainty and unique difficulties of these missions and their visibility and political sensitivity, the behavior of each soldier potentially has strategically significant consequences."³¹ Therefore, it is imperative that lieutenants understand the broader context of their decisions and can understand how the consequences of their decisions will impact the overall operation.

As mentioned, the consequences of decisions that junior leaders make in the future will no longer be confined to the tactical situation. With the influx of media and other civilians on the battlefield, decisions at every level could have immediate consequences for the entire operation as actions are no longer confined to the military audience. The ability to see the broader picture and to make decisions within that context requires a more mature lieutenant who has developed an ability for systems thinking. Peter Senge says that systems thinking is "a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things."³² Lieutenants must not only be able to see the interrelationships between parts of the entire system, they must be able to articulate that understanding to subordinate leaders to empower them to make decisions that will not create strategic consequences contrary to mission success.

In summary, the increased dispersion of troops across the battlefield creates a demanding situation for the leader. In some instances, dispersion makes it more difficult to motivate subordinates and maintain cohesion because of the distance between them. In other cases, the dispersion adds greater emphasis on the ability of the junior leader to make on-the-spot decisions with potentially significant implications for the overall

³¹ Ibid.

operation. Regardless of whether conducting stability operations or conventional warfare, the difficulties associated with tactical dispersion and the tactical-strategic link to decision making will remain.

Changing Nature of Society

In addition to the problems associated with dispersion, young leaders are also faced with the challenge of motivating and inspiring a new generation of soldiers. Changes in societal values have caused military and civilian leaders in the army to create special enticements for people to join as well as unprecedented incentives for those who are already serving to remain on active duty.³³ Most of these programs are in the form of monetary inducements, promises of increased stabilization, reduced operations tempo, or improvements in pay and benefits. Why are these changes and incentives necessary to recruit and retain the Army's all-volunteer force? One potential answer is that the society from which we draw our soldiers has different values than in the past.

Recruits entering the Army from "Generation X" possess different values and expectations than soldiers in the past.³⁴ This generation of soldier is the product of a society with values that are somewhat different than in the past. Many youths do not see the utility in serving their country when they could make more money in a civilian job.³⁵

³² Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York, Doubleday, 1990), 68.

³³ The Army has instituted a number of new programs in the past year to increase recruiting and retention numbers. These efforts include civilian schooling, shorter enlistment terms, increased bonuses, and even "guaranteed" civilian employment opportunities after an initial term of service.

³⁴ Losyk, "Generation X". This article gives an excellent summary of the characteristics of members of Generation X. For additional material, see the executive summary of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) paper describing the societal factors influencing current recruitment and retention in the Army.

³⁵ Dorn, et al., "Military Culture", 4. Although the services were able to meet their enlistment goals for the 2000 fiscal year, there has been a downward trend in enlistment in the recent past and significant programs had to be introduced to entice enough young people to join to meet the 2000 goals.

Generation X'ers reportedly do not possess the same inclination towards selfless service to the nation that was prevalent many years ago.³⁶ A report on military culture from the Center for Strategic & International Studies states that,

“Much in our contemporary civil culture is not exemplary, however, and some of its negative features complicate the challenge of sustaining a vibrant military culture. The family structure in the United States has been weakened, and we have produced a generation of bright young people who all too often lack role models or moral anchors. In addition, a booming economy, the lack of a major military adversary, and decreasing numbers of community leaders with military experience have made military service an increasingly remote issue for many Americans.”³⁷

The implications of this reality are many. Besides the problem in recruiting which results from this trend, the motivation potential of soldiers who enter the military is fundamentally different than in the past. It becomes the leader's responsibility to inculcate the appropriate values in these soldiers and to inspire them to accomplish missions that aren't easily linked to a vital national interest. No matter what type of operation the Army deploys forces to, the leader will have to be able to clearly articulate the purpose for conducting the operation and link it to some higher cause that can motivate subordinates and inspire them to great achievement.

Civilians on the Battlefield

An additional challenge for new lieutenants is the increase in the number of civilian non-combatants on the battlefield. These can be non-combatants from the host country or from any one of a number of non-governmental organizations (NGO) or private voluntary

³⁶ Losyk, “Generation X”, 42.

³⁷ Dorn, et al., “Military Culture”, 4. This report focused primarily on influences of American culture within the military. The report highlighted the “cultural strains” mentioned above that society places on military leadership.

organizations (PVO) who routinely inhabit the battlefield, especially during humanitarian support operations. Increasingly the media has stepped up its efforts to be on the cutting edge of the news whenever U.S. forces are deployed. This phenomenon is not restricted to humanitarian operations as the media is just as likely to be present on the conventional battlefield of the future as it is during a peace operation. Leaders will have to know how to interact with and influence these individuals so that they do not interfere with the tactical scenario.

In addition to the potential impact on tactical operations, this media presence is a primary reason for the increasing link between tactics and strategy. As media present near real-time information to the public, small unit actions take on a grander audience and hence have the potential to have strategic consequences. LCDR John F. Kirby, previously the public affairs officer for the U.S. Second Fleet, writes that “news reporting is often just as significant in determining success as military action...”³⁸ Interacting in a positive way with media personnel and considering the potential media consequences of decisions can help tremendously in maintaining a positive public opinion for any operation.

The presence of other non-combatants also creates challenges for the tactical leader. Progressively U.S. forces are relying more on contractors for logistics and maintenance support during operations. These personnel are part of the U.S. contingent but are not in the chain of command and do not answer directly to the lieutenant in any given situation. Leaders must be taught how to influence these people without having legitimate authority over them.

³⁸ John F. Kirby, “Helping Shape Today’s Battlefield: Public Affairs as an Operational Function,” in *Essays 2000* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2000), 84.

Additionally, NGOs and PVOs also have a significant influence during operations. These humanitarian relief agencies sometimes have a different agenda or mode of operations than military forces and are not constrained by the same rules of engagement as U.S. soldiers. Officers at every level need to be able to understand, and respect, their positions and must be able to work with them to get the maximum benefit from their organization.³⁹ Due to the presence of so many non-military personnel on the battlefield, it is increasingly important for lieutenants to be able to deal effectively with personnel who are not in their chain of command but who wield significant influence because of their position, skills, or knowledge. This requires an ability to see others' perspectives, a tolerance for ambiguity, and an ability to be persuasive in trying to influence people outside of the organization.

Summary of the New Environment

Battlefield dispersion, societal changes, and the increase of civilians on the battlefield all combine to create unique situations for the young lieutenant. Distances between units and between soldiers require lieutenants to develop a strong sense of duty and commitment on the part of subordinates. Dispersion, combined with multinational operations and incessant media attention, will continue to put added pressure on the tactical leader to maintain a broader perspective and to be attuned to the strategic implications of tactical decisions. This environment creates specific leadership requirements for tactical leaders that must be developed at an early stage so that they are prepared to lead soldiers in the complex and ambiguous operations they will inevitably

³⁹ Joint Pub 3-08, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations* (9 October 1996). This document outlines specific issues to address when dealing with NGOs and PVOs who are not in the military hierarchy yet wield significant influence in many operations.

encounter. These attributes cannot be part of a pre-deployment train-up nor can the Army wait until lieutenants get the opportunity to develop these traits via operational experience. The potential impact of lieutenant actions on operational and strategic outcomes has become too great.

CHAPTER THREE

LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

The leaders whom we admire the most help to
revitalize our shared values and beliefs.⁴⁰

Due to the necessity to be prepared for any type of operation, and the ambiguity of the nature of the potential threat, the Army has exerted substantial effort to determine the leadership attributes necessary for leaders to be successful in the variety of environments of the future.⁴¹ The first part of this monograph established the context of leadership for the near future. It is anticipated that the leadership challenges for the junior officer will stem from leading a diverse group of subordinates, each with unique value systems, dispersed throughout a battlefield that will include both combatants and non-combatants. Additionally, decisions required of these young leaders will have both tactical and strategic implications. This context requires that leaders at all levels have certain knowledge, skills, and attributes that will help them succeed under those conditions.

While many of the articles written about the leadership attributes necessary to operate in this changing social and strategic environment revolve around the nature of operations shifting from a conventional war to a more asymmetric threat, there really is no difference between the two in terms of leadership. Operations other than war require at least a base set of leadership skills that are consistent with the skills required of lieutenants in a conventional conflict. One type of operation may require knowledge of a specific tactical solution or technical data for a weapon system but those types of skills

⁴⁰ John W. Gardner. *On Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 14.

can usually be trained immediately prior to deployment. For example, a lieutenant deploying to Kosovo may want to study the establishment of checkpoints, techniques for negotiation, communicating through interpreters, and host-nation specific norms before deploying. There are core leadership attributes, however, that are consistent across operations and require more time to develop which are the focus of this monograph.

What leader attributes are required to prepare new officers for the full range of potential scenarios? With the increased dispersion on the battlefield, leaders will have to be able to quickly assess a situation and make decisions consistent with the strategic concept without the assistance of senior officer input. Additionally, lieutenants will have to be able to clearly articulate to their subordinates both the tactical scenario intent and how the mission falls into the larger scheme. To do this, leaders must have a broad perspective and an ability to grasp how their operation fits into the geo-political context.

This requires a leader who is more than just tactically and technically proficient in specific branch skills. The ROTC Future Lieutenant Study concluded that "a rich and varied socio-political knowledge base is often more important than a proficiency with the employment of weapons systems."⁴² It is no longer sufficient to simply understand the mission and intent of the next higher commander. Special emphasis must be paid to U.S. national interests and how the operation supports them. This broader perspective

⁴¹ Walter Ulmer, "Military Leadership into the 21st Century: Another Bridge Too Far?" in *Parameters* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 7. General Ulmer summarizes several studies concerning leader traits necessary for leadership in the future. See also McChrystal, Gardner, and McHale for additional leader attributes.

⁴² U.S. Army Cadet Command, *ROTC Future Lieutenant Study*, (Fort Monroe, VA, 1999) The U.S. Army Cadet Command conducted this study to determine whether their training and education was adequately preparing ROTC lieutenants for the Army. The results were consistent with the assertion that cognitive ability and interpersonal skills were more important than technical abilities.

necessitates a capability for systems thinking – an ability to see the inter-relationships among the parts of the whole.⁴³

The changing nature of American society also has a significant impact on leadership and creates a requirement for specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors on the part of the new lieutenant. Many of the soldiers entering the service today are doing so not because they have a strong desire to serve in the military, but to make money for college or to get a set of skills for a future career. This presents a problem for lieutenants who engage in an autocratic leadership style based on the old Army system of enforced discipline and obedience. To influence subordinates in such a way that their values change, a leader must be perceived as holding those values and sincerely caring about the welfare of his subordinates.⁴⁴

This does not imply that discipline and obedience have lost their place in the military. As a unique institution, the military must continue to instill these values in its soldiers to be successful. The nature of the force, however, requires that soldiers be treated with more respect and that discipline be imparted as a matter of necessity rather than a matter of fact. Discipline should not be the default answer to get soldiers to obey orders. Leaders must develop means of inspiring soldiers and creating the desire to obey, rather than simply using coercion or positional power. This “new” type of leadership is called transformational leadership and requires a specific set of skills and attributes of the leader.⁴⁵ These KSBs are discussed in detail below.

⁴³ Senge, 68-69.

⁴⁴ Bass, *A New Paradigm of Leadership: An Inquiry Into Transformational Leadership*, (U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavioral Science: 1996), 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 17-27.

Finally, the influx of civilians on the battlefield means that young officers will have to interact with, and influence, individuals who are not in the military and are not under their direct control. Contractors, media personnel, and humanitarian agency workers will be prevalent on the battlefield of the future. Leaders will not be able to resort to traditional military means of influence in order to work with these individuals. Positional power and the threat of UCMJ action mean very little to people outside of the military. Therefore, lieutenants interacting with civilians and non-combatants will have to be adept at other means of influence and persuasion either to incorporate them into the mission or to prevent them from interfering with the mission.

Since each soldier and non-combatant a leader has to influence will be unique, the leader must develop an ability to differentiate between individuals and choose an appropriate leadership style or action depending on the circumstances. Lieutenants must be taught a variety of leader behaviors so that they can choose the appropriate one when the situation arises. Emotional intelligence (EQ) enhances the ability to discern relevant situational cues in order to choose the correct leader strategy.⁴⁶ Developing this critical skill in young officers would significantly enhance their performance regardless of the situation.

In summary, the leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to lead in this type of environment include an ability for systems thinking, a transformational leadership style, and the emotional intelligence necessary to better understand the various influences in any context. Each of these are discussed below.

⁴⁶ Robert Cooper and Ayman Sawaf, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1996)

Systems Thinking

In his book *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge describes the notion of “systems thinking” as critical to the success of an organization. Systems thinking is an understanding that an organization is made up of many parts and that these parts are interrelated. An action in one part of the system has implications for other parts of the system.⁴⁷ Senge goes on to say, “doing the obvious thing does not produce the obvious, desired result.”⁴⁸ This adds to the leadership problem for lieutenants as leader actions at the tactical level sometimes result in different long-term outcomes than those intended. It is necessary for lieutenants to understand this phenomenon before reaching their first units so that they will be able to make qualitatively better decisions that will produce desirable long-term results.

It is also important that young leaders entering the military understand where the military fits into the social and political landscape. More importantly, it is necessary for lieutenants to comprehend the role of the military in political affairs and to be able to articulate the intent of any particular action as it relates to national interests. Rather than simply understanding the mission and intent of a particular operation, lieutenants must understand how specific missions fit into the tactical scenario as well as how tactical decisions may affect the larger operational and strategic scheme. This breadth of understanding is often reserved for education at more senior levels. Thinking in terms of systems requires development over a longer period of education and experience and is not something that can be taught just prior to deployment. Systems thinking must be included as a part of a lieutenant’s pre-commissioning education.

⁴⁷ Senge, 68.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 71.

Transformational Leadership

Bernard Bass, a renowned leadership researcher and theorist, discussed the application of transformational leadership to the Army as part of a study conducted by the Army Research Institute. The study was designed to develop a leadership theory that was relevant to the Army. His empirical data support the notion that transformational leadership is not just beneficial for the Army but is necessary if Army leaders are to be successful in the future environment.⁴⁹

Transformational leadership has four components: charismatic leadership, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. For lieutenants to be successful in the environment described in the first part of this monograph, they must be trained (developed) in the art of transformational leadership. While some people argue that many aspects of leadership are innate traits and cannot be learned, Bass devotes an entire section to the methods available to develop transformational leadership in the officer corps of the Army.⁵⁰

Of particular note in Bass' work is that transformational leadership is,

“...based on long-term development rather than a quick dose of training. On the other hand, transactional leaders tended to take on particular leadership roles according to the situation they faced – the kind of leadership then taught in short-term training programs.”⁵¹

The implication of this statement is that if the Army desires transformational leaders, it must take efforts to develop the KSBs for transformational leadership at an early point in

⁴⁹ Bass, *New Paradigm of Leadership*. This is an excellent source which not only describes transformational leadership but gives substantial empirical support for the theory and its effectiveness. Bass does an excellent job of taking the theory and applying it directly to the military context in terms of how it can be implemented and how it can be taught.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 105-143.

their development and take a long-term approach to the training. Short-term training on leadership theories, or worse, simple TTPs for particular scenarios, does not produce the necessary skills to influence the values and actions of soldiers.

According to Bass, transformational leadership also helps leaders instill greater commitment in the military and in the current mission.⁵² This may be especially relevant in operations-other-than-war, where it could be difficult for soldiers to see the relevance in what they are doing. In such cases, it is important for the young lieutenant to be able to articulate clearly the purpose for the mission and to appeal to each soldier's particular motivations and values to encourage him or her to work harder at tasks that would otherwise be perceived as unimportant.⁵³ Transformational leadership involves this type of interaction and results in this type of commitment from the follower. Transactional leadership often results in behavior change, (i.e., compliance), but is less likely to result in attitudinal change. It is the attitudinal change which results in more long-term commitment and should be the goal for most leadership situations.⁵⁴

Emotional Intelligence

With the complex nature of operations, and the diverse makeup of the forces on the battlefield, it is difficult for leaders to tailor their leadership skills to meet the individual needs of all subordinates. Many times, especially when under stressful conditions, inexperienced leaders tend to revert to a "default" leadership style that has worked in the

⁵¹ Ibid., 107

⁵² Ibid., 17

⁵³ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 37-39. Bass recognizes that transactional leadership may be optimal in some situations that require an immediate decision and compliance on the part of subordinates. These situations, however, are only temporary and provide an immediate, short term solution that not may be effective as a long term solution to behavior in the future.

past. Since lieutenants have a limited number of experiences from which to draw, the added stress of a given tactical situation can result in a poorer decision.⁵⁵ Cooper and Sawaf support this argument when they say, "...whenever stress rises the human brain switches to autopilot and has an inherent tendency to do more of the same, only harder."⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the decision that results is oftentimes inappropriate for the given situation or person in question. An ability to discern quickly the contextual variables and the individual requirements of a particular subordinate are critical skills for leaders to possess in order to react appropriately to a given situation.

In a research report on leadership, Hooijberg, Bullis, and Hunt describe a new theory of leadership that incorporates this leader flexibility. They argue that effective leadership requires that leaders exhibit "behavioral complexity" – a variety of roles and behaviors to use depending on the situation. Critical for this theory to be effective is the ability of the leader to discern the important aspects of the situation and to choose the appropriate leader response from his "behavioral repertoire."⁵⁷

A similar construct in leadership research is the characteristic known as emotional intelligence (EQ). This concept was popularized by Daniel Goleman in his book *Emotional Intelligence* and has received significant attention as a predictor of effective leadership.⁵⁸ Emotional intelligence refers to leaders' ability to "maintain control of their

⁵⁵ Klein, *Sources of Power*, 275-6. Klein points out that "experts" can separate the irrelevant cues from others impacting a decision while inexperienced decision-makers in stressful conditions are more likely to use response patterns from previous experiences that may not be appropriate for the given situation.

⁵⁶ Robert Cooper and Ayman Sawaf, *Executive EQ: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and Organizations* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1996), pg. xxx.

⁵⁷ Hooijberg, Bullis, and Hunt. "Behavioral Complexity and the Development of Military Leadership for the Twenty-First Century," in *Out-of-the-Box Leadership: Transforming the Twenty-First Century Army and Other Top Performing Organizations*. eds. Hunt, Dodge, and Wong (Stamford, CT: Jai Press, 1999), 111-116.

⁵⁸ Pinder, Craig C. *Work Motivation in Organizational Behavior* (Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 94-95.

emotions and of their ability to read and respond appropriately to the emotions of other people.”⁵⁹ This is a desirable trait because it helps leaders to accurately assess the relevant variables in a given context, including their own emotions, and adjust their leader actions to better respond to that situation. When combined with leadership training on various ways to motivate subordinates, this ability would allow leaders to alter their leader actions to best fit the situation at hand.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, it is becoming increasingly probable that MOOTW type missions are more likely to occur than traditional warfighting missions, at least in the near term. Given that these types of missions tend to be more complex and involve greater numbers of civilians and non-combatants, emotional intelligence would serve a leader well to better deal with the various situations and people likely to be encountered. Even in a more straightforward conventional conflict, emotional intelligence would help a young officer better deal with the diverse nature of members of the Army and the increased decentralization of decision-making on a dispersed battlefield.

Summary of Leadership Requirements

The changing strategic environment necessitates a change in leadership for Army officers. There is no longer the focus on the Soviet Union as the one major, conventional threat. The absence of an identifiable adversary reduces the motivating factor for serving in the armed forces. Additionally, the lack of a peer competitor makes it more likely that the U.S. Army will be deployed against various lesser perceived threats. The Army in the future may find itself mired in regional conflicts that have distant connections to the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 457.

public's perception of national interests. This requires a leader who is able to inspire subordinates toward mission accomplishment when intrinsic motivation may be lacking.

The dispersion of troops also necessitates a transformational approach to leadership. Individualized concern for subordinates is most likely to result in a greater amount of confidence that they are being looked after. Soldiers will be better able to withstand the forces that diminish cohesion in the face of danger if they believe that the leader truly cares for them and will not abandon them or unnecessarily place them in harm's way. This further demonstrates the need for leaders with the knowledge, skills and behaviors of transformational leadership.

Additionally, as dispersion forces lieutenants to increasingly make quick decisions with potentially strategic outcomes, it becomes more apparent that creating a means to develop a systems thinking approach in lieutenants is a necessity. Leaders must be able to grasp the larger context and anticipate the long-term, strategic consequences of tactical decisions. They must be able to think beyond the immediate tactical situation and anticipate the long-term consequences of every action.

Finally, leaders must also develop an ability to discern subtle cues from the environment when making these decisions. As more civilians enter the battlefield, and peace operations become more prevalent, leaders must be able to influence people not under their direct control. They must be able to diffuse potentially dangerous situations and resolve conflicts in a timely and efficient manner. Emotional intelligence aids in these capabilities by making leaders more aware of themselves and those around them.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEADER DEVELOPMENT

...the Army's leader development process will require a greater level of depth, breadth and complexity to adequately prepare leaders to successfully function in increasingly challenging environments.⁶⁰

Department of the Army Pamphlet 350-58, *Leader Development for America's Army*, is the primary reference for United States Army doctrine concerning leader development. It describes the Army's leader development system as being divided into three "pillars": institutional training and education, operational assignments, and self-development. Each of these pillars contributes to the officer's overall development. Through the course of a career, officers integrate activities in each of the three pillars into a comprehensive leader development program designed to progressively prepare them for future positions of responsibility.⁶¹

The Institutional Pillar

Institutional training and education provides the foundation for leader development in the Army and is the starting point for continued development through operational assignments and self-study. The institutional foundation is divided into two components: pre-commissioning education and post-commissioning education. Pre-commissioning sources establish the baseline capabilities in officers to allow them to attend their specific officer's basic courses on an even footing with other lieutenants. Post-commissioning

⁶⁰ Horner, "Leader Development," 84.

⁶¹ DA Pamphlet 350-58. This manual describes the Army's leader development system and the desired outcomes for each pillar in the developmental system.

education is focused initially on preparing lieutenants in the basic skills of their specific branch and then on preparation for successive jobs as they progress in their careers.⁶²

There are three primary commissioning sources for the United States Army: the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), the United States Military Academy (USMA), and the Officer Candidate School (OCS). Each of these sources attempts to give its cadets leadership experience by letting them lead their peers while in school. While this is beneficial to some degree, it is insufficient for many reasons. First, leading peers – who often have similar values and beliefs – is much different from leading a diverse group of soldiers in a unit. As mentioned earlier, it takes a different type of leadership to influence someone's values. Due to the relative homogeneity of the value systems of officer candidates, these leadership situations cannot provide the future officer with a complete developmental experience.

Second, only a select few leaders in USMA, ROTC, or OCS get to be leaders who can maximize the benefit from their positions. Those who are selected as class leaders, (battalion commanders, etc.), are the only cadets routinely exposed to the thinking of senior officers so that they may benefit from their mentorship. This dialogue helps them think through the broader issues of any leadership situation and facilitates the development of a systems approach to problem solving. The remainder of the future officers, however, do not get this same developmental experience before commissioning.

In addition to the lack of decision-making experience or inspirational leadership experience gained in pre-commissioning training, the curriculum outcomes for pre-

⁶² Ibid. Chapter Two describes the Institutional training aspect of the Army's leader development program. Subsequent chapters are devoted to the other pillars of operational assignments and self-development.

commissioning are not sufficient to prepare lieutenants for an initial assignment with troops. Of the eighty-seven (87) pre-commissioning tasks outlined in leader development doctrine, only five (5) are related to leadership or the development of systems thinking.⁶³

After commissioning, lieutenants are assigned to a specific branch and are sent to their branch specific Officer's Basic Course (OBC). At OBC, officers learn the requisite skills to perform the designated missions for their specific branch. The basic courses focus on the technical and tactical skills of the platoon leader necessary for the branch's primary go-to-war mission. As an example, the focus of instruction at the Infantry Officer's Basic Course (IOBC) is on those tasks necessary to lead an infantry platoon on specific missions. Leadership instruction is limited to just thirteen hours of instruction.⁶⁴ While the tactical and technical proficiency taught at the basic courses are important, the time spent on developing this knowledge base in young officers takes time away from the important developmental tasks of broadening perspectives, thinking in terms of systems, and learning transformational leadership techniques.

The Operational Assignment Pillar

After establishing the base of leader development in pre-commissioning education and at the branch-specific basic courses, the Army relies on the experience gained during operational assignments and self-development to complete a lieutenant's development. The operational assignment pillar of the leader development system, however, also has shortcomings in terms of developing lieutenants. According to doctrine, operational

⁶³ Leader Development Division, "Preparing Leaders for Force XXI," available at <http://www-dcst.monroe.army.mil/itd/leader/leader.htm>, accessed 6 September 2000.

⁶⁴ Infantry Officer's Basic Course, "CL9B20 Intro to Military Leadership," available at <http://192.153.150.25/catd/cald/ldrs/IOBC/cl920>, accessed 16 November 2000.

assignments are supposed to provide “the experience needed for more complex and higher-level assignments.”⁶⁵ While this prepares officers for future assignments, it does nothing to prepare lieutenants for operations upon entering their initial unit. Therefore, other than OCS graduates and a small percentage of officer candidates in ROTC and USMA who have served previously as enlisted soldiers, most newly commissioned lieutenants have limited operational experience upon entering their initial assignments.

Any experience these officer candidates do have, while beneficial, is insufficient to prepare them for the complex environment in which they will lead. Previous experience as an enlisted soldier would prove invaluable to any officer. The experience, however, would be limited in utility because it would be from the perspective of a junior enlisted soldier and would most likely not provide the broadening of perspectives that is required of the operational environment.

The Self-Development Pillar

The final pillar of the Army’s leader development system is the self-development pillar. Upon commissioning, each officer is expected to begin a program of self improvement to supplement the formal education and experiential learning accomplished through institutional training and operational assignments. This self-development can take the form of reading professional books and articles, seeking developmental assignments, and self-evaluation. “The concept of self-development places responsibility squarely on the leader to do his share to attain and sustain competency.”⁶⁶ The problem

⁶⁵ DA Pam 350-58, *Leader Development*, Chapter 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter 4.

with this concept is that it assumes that leaders know what it is they need to improve upon. This may be true for some leaders who have had various experiences but this is not for newly commissioned lieutenants.

According to the Center for Creative Leadership, leader development is dependent upon three elements: assessment, challenge, and support.⁶⁷ For lieutenants to be able to understand what leader dimensions they need to improve on, they must first compare their current leadership abilities with those leadership KSBs needed for success. This assessment requires some experience that allows them to identify a shortcoming in their own capability. Since lieutenants have limited operational experiences, especially in the type of complex environments in which they are likely to find themselves, they cannot accurately assess their own leadership weaknesses.

The Army's leader development system fails to provide the lieutenant with sufficient information or experience to succeed in his first assignment. To be successful, the Army's leader development system must assume that lieutenants will not be deployed until they have had sufficient time in their first unit to identify shortcomings and address them. Given the pace and nature of recent operations, this assumption is likely to prove false.

Although the system is logical and progressive, there is a fundamental flaw in its design that leaves lieutenants at a distinct disadvantage. Horner notes that, "The Army's system is predicated on the belief that leaders should have the opportunity to grow over the course of a career to handle the increased levels of responsibility accompanying promotion."⁶⁸ Lieutenants are presumed to need only a basic level of KSBs, while more

⁶⁷ McCauley, Moxley, and Velsor. *Handbook of Leader Development*, 9.

⁶⁸ Horner, "Leader Development," 81.

senior leaders are assumed to require a different set of skills and attributes. While this may be true to some degree, the distinction is blurring. The changing nature of the tactical environment requires that lieutenants now possess many of the same skills and attributes previously thought to be unneeded until later in their careers. The problem is that the leader development system is not currently designed to ensure these attributes are developed early enough in an officer's career for lieutenants to benefit.

As an example, McChrystal, et. al. identified a shortcoming in officer education in their 1997 study. Their recommendation was to change the instruction at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) to include classes on systems thinking.⁶⁹ They had identified this as a need for field grade officers and concluded that the Army's leader development system did not adequately prepare these officers to think in these terms. Given the environment of conflict discussed in the previous chapter, it is arguable that this ability needs to be taught or developed even earlier in the institutional system so that lieutenants are also able to deal with the complexity of the future battlefield.

⁶⁹ McChrystal, Gardner, and McHale, "Bridging the Gap," 49-50.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

The changing nature of the threat facing the United States, as well as the changing nature of society, pose a particular set of problems for the junior military leader.

Lieutenants must maintain a broad, systems perspective in any tactical situation. They must understand individual differences in motivation and perspective from soldiers who come from a variety of backgrounds and a significantly different society than twenty years ago. Lieutenants must also be able to combine an understanding of the tactical, strategic, and political aspects of a problem with these individual motivations and personalities to create viable solutions to a myriad of potential problems. The lieutenant then must be able to articulate that solution to subordinates in such a way to motivate and inspire them to perform to their maximum capabilities.

The leader development process in the Army does not adequately prepare lieutenants for these tasks for several reasons. First, the KSBs developed in new lieutenants do not adequately prepare them for success across the wide spectrum of operations for which they must be prepared. Development is too narrowly focused on lieutenants gaining technical expertise before joining their units. Second, the Army's leader development system does not promote the development of systems thinking early enough in officer careers. Finally, the system does not prepare lieutenants to develop alternative leader actions and then choose from those various leader strategies depending on the situational context.

Full-Spectrum Operations

The potential threats and likely missions for the Army in the first years of the twenty-first century are many and varied. Although unlikely, Army forces must be prepared for a conventional battle against a peer competitor. More probably, the Army must be prepared to continue to conduct less conventional operations that are in the national interest. The Army's leader development system must prepare leaders for success in either scenario.

The current system, however, is based primarily on the situation that was prevalent in the cold war.⁷⁰ At that time, lieutenants had to focus on mastering the technical and tactical skills necessary to lead a platoon against a known enemy. Since the war could start at any moment, lieutenants had to be prepared upon entering their unit.

Additionally, since the enemy was a major threat to the United States, leaders could spend less time learning how to motivate and inspire subordinates. These conditions no longer apply yet the leader development system still emphasizes these same outcomes.

It is now uncertain who the enemy will be or what the tasks will be that need to be accomplished. Lieutenants don't necessarily have to be proficient in every task prior to arrival at the unit because there will be some preparation time before the unit deploys. Leadership, however, becomes more important as soldiers question the requirement to deploy to another country that poses little threat to the United States. Although the leader development system adequately prepares lieutenants for a MTW against a substantial peer threat, changes need to be made to provide the knowledge, skills, and attributes

⁷⁰ McChrystal, Gardner, and McHale, "Competence Gap," pg. i (Executive Summary).

necessary to succeed across the full spectrum of operations. Training and education on leadership and human behavior would better prepare the lieutenant in either scenario.⁷¹

Systems Thinking

The inclusion of systems thinking in the institutional education and training pillar was recommended by McChrystal and colleagues in 1997.⁷² This recommendation, however, was to add classes at the Command and General Staff College for field grade officers to prepare them for higher level command and staff positions. The belief that this only needs to be taught at the field grade level is mistaken. Given the strategic implications of tactical actions, lieutenants must be able to see how their actions influence the broader context. They must be trained in systems thinking before entering their units so that their actions are more fully integrated with the broader mission and they can make informed decisions without input from senior officers.

Flexibility

In the current leader development system, the responsibility for developing various leadership styles and techniques is left to the operational and self-development pillars. Due to lack of operational assignments, lieutenants are limited in the number of alternative leader actions they can observe and therefore are not able to determine what leadership styles are available or appropriate in a given situation. Additionally, without specific education concerning human behavior and motivation, lieutenants are not able to understand why a particular action succeeded or failed.

⁷¹ While some cadets get formal education on leadership and human behavior, this is not a requirement of the Army leader development system and is not universal across officer candidates.

⁷² McChrystal, Gardner, and McHale, "Competence Gap," 48-49.

For example, a lieutenant may observe a company commander demeaning a non-commissioned officer (NCO) at physical training. When the NCO responds to this action, the lieutenant may think that demeaning behavior is appropriate for that situation. There are at least two problems with this being considered leader development. First, the lieutenant has no idea why the leader action worked and therefore will have difficulty transferring that to future scenarios. Second, with only limited experience, the lieutenant is not aware of alternative leader actions that might also be successful. Since the current system does not provide sufficient education on leadership or systems thinking, it must be altered to better prepare lieutenants for the leadership challenges they will face.

Recommendations

First, reduce the amount of time spent on tactical proficiency during pre-commissioning and Officer's Basics Courses. While technical and tactical proficiency are obviously desired characteristics of new lieutenants entering a unit, the nature of current operations and the social demographics of the force require much more of junior officers.⁷³ The focus on tactical and technical competence necessarily reduces the amount of time in pre-commissioning and Officer Basic Courses that can be spent on other topics such as understanding human behavior, motivating and influencing others, emotional intelligence, and systems thinking.

Leadership theory and human behavior should be required courses for all cadets, regardless of commissioning source. This education should then be reinforced during the Basic Course with specific examples and vignettes from that specific branch. Officers

⁷³ For a detailed list of KSBs recommended by Battalion Commander's see the Battalion Commander's Summary Report to the United States Military Academy, October 1997. The commanders surveyed recognized the need for better interpersonal communication and greater sense of commitment to the Army.

should role play leadership scenarios in a variety of contexts and then critique each other's leader actions. This would provide officers with an opportunity for reflection about their personal leadership philosophy as well as an opportunity to see how alternative leader actions can be effective in any situation.

While this training would reduce the amount of time available for developing tactical proficiency, officers can spend time once they arrive at their unit interacting with NCOs to learn the weapons systems and tactics in greater detail. Not only will this provide lieutenants with the knowledge necessary to lead soldiers effectively, it will also require them to interact with soldiers once they arrive at their unit.

The second recommendation is to put lieutenants into a staff position immediately upon entering a unit. Since operational assignments are such a critical part of leader development, a lieutenant should be able to attain some of the benefit of being in a unit prior to assuming the responsibility of a leadership role. Lieutenants should be given a staff role to perform while they become tactically and technically proficient. During this time they can observe leaders at all levels and compare the actions they see with the leader actions they studied. During this time they should be involved in a mentor program with a more senior officer. This would give them an opportunity to further mature and to broaden their perspectives as they interact with someone who has been in the Army for at least a few years.

Finally, lieutenants must be inculcated with the belief that they are part of a profession. The Army must remember that lieutenants are from the same generation as the soldiers they must lead. In order to influence the values of subordinates, leaders must

set the example thru personal sacrifice.⁷⁴ If lieutenants are expected to instill a selfless service ethic in their subordinates, they must first be imbued with that same value.

Further Research

To implement these changes, it is necessary to determine whether or not lieutenants are cognitively capable of developing a systems thinking perspective at this stage in their careers. Further research must be conducted to determine the cognitive capacity of individuals in this age group. Additionally, further research must be conducted to determine the impact on personnel manning. Although the benefits would be worthwhile, the cost associated with delaying lieutenants' assumption of platoon leader positions may be prohibitive.

Conclusion

Leaders must be more than just competent in a set of tactical or technical skills when they reach their first unit. They must be competent in the art and science of "leadership." The current and future environments will require leaders who can build cohesion within a diverse unit and who can articulate a clear purpose for every mission. The Army's leader development system must recognize this and focus on developing leadership skills rather than simply attempting to reach a certain level of technical and tactical proficiency in lieutenants prior to their first assignment.

Whereas in the past the Army may have been able to institute a progressive system that built capability over time, the changes in the operational environment necessitate that leaders develop appropriate KSBs prior to their first leadership assignment. Lieutenants

⁷⁴ Bass, *Transformational Leadership*, 19-22.

may be faced with situations previously handled by more senior officers. In order to ensure that they are capable of dealing with such situations, the Army must develop the appropriate attributes in them. The U.S. Army cannot wait to develop these traits via operational experience or institutional training at a later time. It is imperative that the leader development system creates in them the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for effective leadership prior to giving them the responsibility for leading soldiers.

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